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WE take leave of Mr. Dennistoun with many thanks for the entertainment and instruction that his work has afforded. Though not belonging to the first class of historical productions, it is an honorable monument of his diligence, accuracy, and good taste. It shows no mean power of philosophic thought, elegant criticism, and clear and vigorous narration.

ART. VI. — *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater, and Suspiria de Profundis: Biographical Essays: Miscellaneous Essays: The Cæsars: Life and Manners: Literary Reminiscences.* By THOMAS DE QUINCEY. Boston: Ticknor, Reed, & Fields. 1851. 7 vols. 12mo.

WE have here collected, for the first time, — thanks to the good taste and enterprise of an American publisher, — the Essays and Reminiscences of a noted English writer, which have appeared, at unequal intervals, during the last thirty years, in Cyclopedias, Reviews, and Magazines. The “Confessions,” which introduce this attractive series, were first published in 1821; the “Suspiria,” regarded as a sequel to the “Confessions,” followed after an interval of twenty-three or twenty-four years. Of the other writings, many were published between these widely separated dates, and some of them considerably subsequent to the last. The form in which they now appear is very agreeable and convenient to the reader, and we could ask only one improvement, — to be informed when and where each paper first appeared. Not to have done this seems to us quite a serious omission. Dates are often important in literary criticism, and, especially in miscellanies gathered from various sources, and extending over the period of a whole generation, they are absolutely essential, in order duly to estimate the merits and the opinions of an author.

The writings of a man are not always a correct indication of his life; yet, though it seems somewhat paradoxical to say so, a knowledge of his life affords one of the best indexes to the character and purposes of the writings. Men often live two

lives, quite disconnected and contradictory, — the inner life of thought, resolution, judgment, and fancy, and the outer life of dull, common-place fact, or insane and low excitement. Sometimes a form of literature springs from the eagerness to escape from the present and familiar. The mind, craving excitement and finding no means of gratifying it in a prosaic age, or wishing to stimulate the passions by novelty, creates a world for itself, brings back upon the scene the forms of actors who have long since played out their *rôle*, and represents in high favor personages who, in real life, would be scouted from all decent society, and soon enough receive a unanimous and fatal verdict. Highwaymen and thieves were never fewer, they never stood at a lower discount, than when Schiller wrote his *Robbers*, and Bulwer his *Paul Clifford*, and Harrison Ainsworth (alas ! the bathos of our illustration !) his *Jack Sheppard*. Yet a knowledge of the personal history of the former of these authors, (and probably the same would be true of the others,) gives us the key to the apparent discrepancy between the spirit of the time and the fiction, and leads to a better understanding both of the author and his work.

Mr. De Quincey has given us some delightful sketches of his life ; but for the reasons hinted at above, we should like to go behind the screen on which he has been pleased to cast the shadows, and see how far the reality corresponds with the picture, and learn, too, something more of those portions which now lie as a blank, since the filling of them is quite necessary for a full understanding even of what is so skilfully portrayed. Not that we doubt the truthfulness of the unusually frank narrative, or have a right to pry into personal secrets which the writer chooses to conceal ; but we are sometimes in doubt whether what is stated apparently as narrative is not really meant for brilliant fiction, or at least for "fiction founded on fact."

The father of Mr. De Quincey, a West Indian merchant, died young, leaving a widow and six children with an income of £1600 a year. Our author was nearly seven years old when this event took place, in 1792 ; of course, he must now have advanced nearly to that boundary which the Scriptures set as the farthest limit of human life, — "The days of our years are threescore years and ten." He was early sent to

school at Bath, where he was when Sir Sidney Smith electrified the city by bringing thither the news of his own escape from the prison of the Temple in Paris. Thence he was taken to a school in Wiltshire, and afterwards, through the influence of friends, to Eton. From this place he made his first visit to London, and has given us, in a delightful paper, the various impressions made by that vast metropolis on his young imagination. Then follows a journey to Ireland, and an imperfect sketch of the Irish Rebellion. By and by, after some travelling and various minor adventures, we find him resting, between the years 1803 and 1808, under the ample shades of Oxford, of which he gives us a somewhat particular account, but which we should be glad if he had expanded to a minute and extended picture, that we might have as complete a knowledge of the Oxford of his day as Mr. Bristed has just given us of the Cambridge of our own. A scholar of rare attainments and independent judgment, a Tory in politics, a sincere son of the Church of England, a man of letters, with a patrimony sufficient, if not ample, and withal something of a recluse, rather indifferent to the public and careless of its topics of local and temporary interest, but moving in a circle of choice friends, Mr. De Quincey has passed his later life, now in the seclusion of Westmoreland, then in the heart of London, again in Edinburgh, and we know not where else, but always the same speculative student, the same ingenious and brilliant writer.

Of the volumes before us, the "Life and Manners" and the "Literary Reminiscences" are the most entertaining, although the "Cæsars" and the "Biographical Essays" contain most of permanent and solid value, in the way of learning and criticism. All these writings, however, stretching over a period of more than thirty years, are marked by similar characteristics. We are struck at once by the exquisite refinement of mind, the subtleness of association, and the extreme tenuity of the threads of thought, the gossamer filaments yet finally weaving themselves together, and thickening imperceptibly into a strong and expanded web. Mingled with this, and perhaps springing from a similar mental habit, is an occasional dreaminess both in speculation and in narrative, when the mind seems to move vaguely round in vast unreturning circles. The thoughts catch hold of no-

thing, but are heaved and tossed like masses of cloud by the wind. An incident of trivial import is turned and turned to catch the light of every possible consequence, and so magnified as to become portentous and terrible. It rises like the indefinite and intangible forms of evil in our dreams, fascinating the mind and overpowering it; and a danger too instantaneous in its action to be an object of contemplation, and too minute to be of any concern, seems to expand till it spreads over and clings to the brain, and half paralyzes every faculty. Is there in this an effect of that opium-eating which nobody ever described more forcibly?

This discursive tendency, this love of chasing a thought throughout all its possible ramifications, detract from the remarkable vigor and beauty of our author's style. What at first is pleasant, by and by becomes wearisome. Starting with a distinct object in full sight, we find ourselves soon turning from it, and wandering hither and thither, — amid fragrant groves and beside still waters, to be sure, — but yet without an aim, and with little result beside weariness of limb, and even a growing displeasure at the beguiling beauties which have cheated us along our devious way. Yet we half hesitate when we say this, in recollection of those sweet and strange dreams, those lofty and magnificent reveries, expressed in language permeated with solemn feeling, or breathing with awful passion, and of those "wandering musical variations" upon the themes of grief or joy with which every heart may sympathize. The "Suspiria" are, some of them, sighs from the lowest depths. They contain passages of unearthly beauty and mysterious power. The mind is swept away by them, into some shadowy region, where one vision of innocence, or beauty, or fear, or sorrow chases another, till all at last "fade into the light of common day."

There is, however, a tendency to a too diffuse treatment of subjects, whether serious or playful. The first paper, on "Murder as one of the Fine Arts," with its various and out-of-the-way lore, with its mixture of subtle discrimination, and satire, and "rollicking" humor, is worthy of Professor Wilson or Charles Lamb. The quaint "lecture" should have ended here with a word or two, to round it off; the second paper is worthy of nobody.

There are few of the essays that do not indicate the multi-

farious reading of the author. Whether discoursing on a fact in history, or a metaphysical speculation, or a mediæval date, or a Roman dinner, he is sure to reveal something which had before escaped us, or to fix with a new emphasis and importance what we already knew. The essay on "Dinner, real and reputed," to which we have referred, will recur to many as an example in point, the illustrations carrying the mind far beyond the strict limits of the subject, and enlightening us on no small or unimportant part of the domestic economy of both ancients and moderns. This learning, however recondite, is not, cumbrous and unwieldy, or introduced for mere show, but brought skilfully to bear in sustaining a criticism admirable for subtle analysis, for cumulative energy, for genial and catholic sympathy.

Equally noticeable, as a characteristic of these writings, is an uncommon graphic power, and, as essential to it, a mastery of the resources of our language, which can come to the best minds only from a profound knowledge of our literature, joined to much, and most careful, practice. Of the importance of thoroughly studying a language he somewhere says: —

"If there is any thing in this world, that, next after the flag of his country and its spotless honor, should be holy in the eyes of a young poet, it is the language of his country. He should spend the third part of his life in studying this language and cultivating its total resources. He should be willing to pluck out his right eye, or to circumnavigate the globe, if by such a sacrifice, if by such an exertion, he could attain to greater purity, precision, compass, or idiomatic energy of diction. This, if he were even a Kalmuck Tartar, who by the way *has* the good feeling and patriotism to pride himself upon his beastly language."

This extract probably indicates the nature of De Quincey's own exertions in studying our rich tongue; with what success, we may see on every page he has written. His random contributions to philosophy make us almost wish he had literally devoted "a third of his life" to such studies, and to the invaluable record of their results. Richness and fulness of thought mark the discussion of every volume. Incidents of little moment are, with a delicate and playful humor, worked up to imaginary importance, and clothed with the garments and colors of an exuberant fancy. A barren and trivial fact, under the power of that life-giving hand, shoots out on

all sides into waving branches, and green leaves, and odoriferous flowers. It is not the fact that interests us, but the mind working upon it, investing it with mock heroic dignity, or rendering it illustrative of really serious principles; or, with the true insight of genius, discovering, in that which a vulgar eye would despise, the germs of grandeur and beauty; the passions of war in the contests of the rival factions of school-boys, the "tragedy, in every peasant's death-bed."

Though there is enough of the playful, there is far more of the serious and earnest. Indeed, it is rare to find an author whose works seem to bear more truly and clearly the stamp of his own mind, and whose judgments, moral, political, or literary, are set down with less apparent reference to the opinions of contemporaries. We find, besides, occasional bursts of enthusiasm, the whole soul glowing and flaming in depicting a noble life, or in response to a noble theme. There is a deep sea in that mind which can be moved. There is a heart which can sympathize with heroism, and pour out its measures of praise with unstinting liberality.

Above all, we find a profound and sincere religious feeling, not merely recognized as an important, but existing as a fixed, principle of judgment. The estimates of life, in the *Essays*, are, in some degree at least, made with reference to the profounder emotions and the more lasting interests which are connected with a moral nature. The thought sometimes moves with a majesty which nothing but the sublimest emotions could excite or sustain. Scenes are opened to the view as awful as the grave, as solemn as the eternal destinies can render them. A mind sufficiently fertile and flexible and discursive, of wide culture, thus sustaining itself upon an immutable morality, building the superstructure of ample knowledge upon the foundation of a simple and unwavering religious faith, is best fitted for the truest judgments in literature, as well as for the safest conduct in life. A profoundly religious mind is, indeed, somewhat apt to become intense and exclusive in some directions; yet there are others where its scope is most free and its action most vigorous. But we pass from these general considerations to the volumes before us.

The interest of the *Literary Reminiscences* centres about Coleridge and Wordsworth. Of the twenty-three chapters

which the two volumes contain, nine are occupied directly with these great names, while, of the remainder, six at least are made up, in great part, of narrative or criticism connected with them. Wordsworth has found a loving and faithful biographer; but the life of Coleridge is yet to be written, if, indeed, it be possible to collect its *dissecta membra*, so as to frame them into one continuous biography. In lack of that, we gather up the more assiduously, here and there, from friends, and — we had nearly said — enemies, (but those he hardly had in later years,) from persons of various capacities, from judges kindly disposed but unwise, keen-sighted but unsympathizing, scattered notices of the ways of that remarkable man who has had so strong an influence upon the scholars and thinkers of his age. He seemed as indifferent to his future fame, as he was careless about his life. When a competent witness, therefore, presents himself, we listen the more eagerly to his story. Mr. De Quincey had abundant opportunities for judging of both Coleridge and Wordsworth, and was not unfriendly to either. To Coleridge, he was, at one time, (we learn it not from himself, but from Cottle's "Recollections,") especially generous. He sent to him a present of three hundred pounds, at a time when Coleridge's necessities were most urgent. It strikes us, therefore, as somewhat singular, that the very first paper on this "illustrious man, the largest and most spacious intellect, the subtlest and the most comprehensive, that has yet existed amongst men," opens with the gravest literary charge which has ever been brought against him, — namely, plagiarism; and that, too, of about the worst kind. Coleridge, as De Quincey seems bent on making it out, was unwilling to acknowledge even the slight and trifling obligations which he lay under for the bare facts on which he based some of his poems. In reading all this over, one would not conjecture, and it certainly does appear very strange, that the sole object of establishing the charge was to enable the writer to declare as his conviction, after having closely followed Coleridge's line of reading for thirty years, that, notwithstanding many minor thefts, he is "as entirely original in all his capital pretensions as any one man that ever existed, as Archimedes in ancient days, or as Shakspeare in modern." Notwithstanding this very positive declaration, we cannot but

think this a queer way of "backing one's friends." This subject, however, so far as it has any interest, has been elsewhere so fully discussed as not to require to be re-opened.

The name of Nether Stowey, a little town among the Quantock hills in Somersetshire, not far from the Bristol Channel, is familiar to all acquainted with the writings of Coleridge. Thither Mr. De Quincey, in the year 1807, then about twenty-two years old, betook himself, in search of the already distinguished poet and philosopher, some fifteen years his senior, who had recently returned from Malta. Not finding him there, the undiscouraged follower proceeded to Bridgewater, fortified with all necessary directions for discovering the object of his search. We give the result in his own words; and this description of the personal appearance of the philosopher may call to mind a still more striking one lately published by a distinguished author.

"I had received directions for finding out the house where Coleridge was visiting; and, in riding down a main street of Bridgewater, I noticed a gateway corresponding to the description given me. Under this was standing, and gazing about him, a man whom I shall describe. In height, he might seem to be about five feet eight; (he was, in reality, about an inch and a half taller, but his figure was of an order which drowns the height;) his person was broad and full, and tended even to corpulence; his complexion was fair, though not what painters technically style fair, because it was associated with black hair; his eyes were large and soft in their expression; and it was from the peculiar appearance of haze or dreaminess, which mixed with their light, that I recognized my object. This was Coleridge. I examined him steadfastly for a minute or more; and it struck me that he saw neither myself nor any other object in the street. He was in a deep reverie; for I had dismounted, made two or three trifling arrangements at an inn door, and advanced close to him, before he had apparently become conscious of my presence. The sound of my voice, announcing my own name, first awoke him; he started, and, for a moment, seemed at a loss to understand my purpose or his own situation; for he repeated rapidly a number of words which had no relation to either of us. There was no *mauvaise honte* in his manner, but simple perplexity, and an apparent difficulty in recovering his position amongst daylight realities. This little scene over, he received me with a kindness of manner so marked that it might be called gracious. The hospitable family, with whom he was domesticated, were distin-

guished for their amiable manners and enlightened understandings: they were descendants from Chubb, the philosophic writer, and bore the same name. For Coleridge, they all testified deep affection and esteem — sentiments in which the whole town of Bridgewater seemed to share; for, in the evening, when the heat of the day had declined, I walked out with him; and, rarely, perhaps never, have I seen a person so much interrupted in one hour's space as Coleridge, on this occasion, by the courteous attentions of young and old." — *Lit. Rem.* vol. i. pp. 164, 165.

Coleridge was then the same mighty discourses that he continued throughout his life. After some little points of business between them were settled, De Quincey goes on to say, —

"Coleridge, — like some great river, the Orellana, or the St. Lawrence, that had been checked and fretted by rocks or thwarting islands, and suddenly recovers its volume of waters, and its mighty music, — swept at once, as if returning to his natural business, into a continuous strain of eloquent dissertation, certainly the most novel, the most finely illustrated, and traversing the most spacious fields of thought, by transitions the most just and logical, that it was possible to conceive." — *Lit. Rem.* i. 167.

We have no time to follow out, with care, the interesting and discriminating sketch which follows. What the relations were between the two in after life, we do not entirely know; but though the early enthusiasm of the follower was cooled by years, and the judgment in some respects modified or reversed, yet De Quincey seems never to have lost his reverence for that "capacious and subtle intellect."

With Wordsworth, the relations of our author seem to have been, in after times, more familiar; and the pictures which he gives of the family, at various times, are very delightful. And then his judgment of the great poet is philosophical, and in the highest degree honest and just. Yet there happened to them a bitter estrangement. The cause is not fully explained; but it seemed that De Quincey, (and not he alone,) expected a return of friendship from the poet, in view of their admiration of him, which they were far from receiving. The fact is stated with extraordinary frankness, and without casting harsh blame upon Wordsworth. Were the strong affections and antipathies of each such as hardly to lie peaceably side by side? Were the idiosyncrasies of each such that the one would naturally require too much homage, the other

ask too liberal a sympathy? We are not called to judge between them, but can easily understand how an unfriendly feeling might arise.

But whatever drawbacks there may be to our author's unqualified admiration of those two greatest literary names of their age, there is none at all in his love for Charles Lamb. We can pardon much in one who understands and heartily loves Elia; "loves and reverences," we might say, for Lamb's life, though most attractive to our affection, has in it an element of grandeur impossible to mistake or to disregard. He who long seemed but as the most graceful of triflers, full of quaint conceits and rare humor, with wide and strange sympathies, stands up at the last as a serious, resolute, self-denying man. The moral resolution with which he bore up under severe family affliction, and the ever threatening aspect of a terrible personal calamity, under which every hope might, at almost any moment, sink into a bottomless abyss, was only equalled by his real humility, and the manly dignity which led him to endure the trial in silence, without complaint, or even the knowledge of many of his most intimate friends. On the ground of Lamb's life and literary merits, De Quincey marches with a most joyful tread. He is discriminating too, not misled by personal admiration, nor blind to the failings which some have taken for the essential and controlling elements of Lamb's character. There is a passage in the *Reminiscences* which is inimitable for its description of Lamb's "festive mirth."

"He was joyous, radiant with wit and frolic, mounting with the sudden motion of a rocket into the highest heaven of outrageous fun and absurdity; then bursting into a fiery shower of puns, chasing syllables with the agility of a squirrel bounding among the trees, or a cat pursuing its own tail; but in the midst of all this stormy gayety, he never said or did any thing that could, by possibility, wound or annoy." . . . "The sensibility of his organization was so exquisite, that effects which travel by separate stages with most other men, in him fled along the nerves with the velocity of light." — *Lit. Rem.* vol. i. pp. 126, 127.

In a review, published years afterward, De Quincey thus sums up the estimate of his life with hearty affection and the surest justice and truth.

"Charles Lamb is gone; his life was a continued struggle in

the service of love the purest, and within a sphere visited by little of contemporary applause. Even his intellectual displays won but a narrow sympathy at any time, and in his earlier period, were saluted with positive derision and contumely on the few occasions when they were not oppressed by entire neglect. But slowly all things right themselves. All merit, which is founded in truth, and is strong enough, reaches, by sweet exhalations, in the end, a higher sensory; reaches higher organs of discernment, lodged in a selecter audience. But the original obtuseness or vulgarity of feeling, that thwarted Lamb's just estimation in life, will continue to thwart its popular diffusion. There are even some that continue to regard him with the old hostility. And we, therefore, standing by the side of Lamb's grave, seemed to hear, on one side, (but in abated tones,) strains of the ancient malice — 'This man, that thought himself to be somebody, is dead — is buried — is forgotten!' and, on the other side, seemed to hear ascending, as with the solemnity of an anthem — 'This man, that thought himself to be nobody, is dead — is buried; his life has been searched; and his memory is hallowed forever!'" *Biog. Essays*, p. 219.

Less elaborate and complete are the sketches of Southey, Sir Humphrey Davy, Mr. Godwin, Edward Irving, Wilson, Talfourd, and some others. The points of Mr. De Quincey's mind seem to be most happily displayed upon biographical and historical subjects. The facts, which he is bound to develop and illustrate, form the solid nucleus around which his thoughts must revolve, and which he may irradiate by the various light of his ample learning and moral and metaphysical discernment, while he is prevented from taking those wider and wilder excursions to which he is sometimes tempted, and which are apt to terminate nowhere. We cannot readily find examples of criticism better sustained or more just than the papers on Shakspeare, Pope, Goethe, and Schiller. We suppose, however, that the admirers of Goethe would be dissatisfied with the judgment passed upon him. Elsewhere he thus speaks of him in comparison with Coleridge. "Both are now gone — Goethe and Coleridge; both are honored by those who knew them, and by multitudes who did not. But the honors of Coleridge are perennial, and will annually grow more verdant; whilst from those of Goethe, every generation will see something fall away, until posterity will wonder at the subverted idol, whose basis being hollow and

unsound, will leave the worship of their fathers an enigma to their descendants." Schiller is evidently the favorite, and he quotes with satisfaction, as if it had been fully answered, the "sublime and pathetic" prayer offered up by the father of Schiller, on the birth of his son. The finest of these critical pieces is that on Shakspeare, "the most august among created intellects," whose station in literature is pronounced "by the unanimous 'all hail!' of intellectual Christendom." We will quote but one passage to show his manner of treating the theme.

"In the great world, therefore, of woman, as the interpreter of the shifting phases and the lunar varieties of that mighty changeable planet, that lovely satellite of man, Shakspeare stands not the first only, not the original only, but is yet the sole authentic oracle of truth. Woman, therefore, the beauty of the female mind, *this* is one great field of his power. The supernatural world, the world of apparitions, *that* is another. For reasons which it would be easy to give, reasons emanating from the gross mythology of the ancients, no Grecian, no Roman, could have conceived a ghost. That shadowy conception, the protesting apparition, the awful projection of the human conscience, belongs to the Christian mind. And in all Christendom, who, let us ask, who, who but Shakspeare has found the power for effectually working this mysterious mode of being? In summoning back to earth 'the majesty of buried Denmark,' how like an awful necromancer does Shakspeare appear! All the pomps and grandeurs which religion, which the grave, which the popular superstition, had gathered about the subject of apparitions, are here converted to his purpose, and bend to one awful effect. The wormy grave brought into antagonism with the scenting of the early dawn; the trumpet of resurrection suggested, and again as an antagonist idea to the crowing of the cock, (a bird ennobled in the Christian mythus by the part he is made to play at the Crucifixion;) its starting 'as a guilty thing,' placed in opposition to its majestic expression of offended dignity when struck at by the partisans of the sentinels; its awful allusions to the secrets of its prison-house; its ubiquity, contrasted with its local presence; its aerial substance, yet clothed in palpable armor; the heart-shaking solemnity of its language, and the appropriate scenery of its haunt, viz., the ramparts of a capital fortress, with no witnesses but a few gentlemen mounting guard at the dead of night, — what a mist, what a *mirage* of vapor, is here accumulated, through which the dreadful being in the centre looms upon us in far larger proportions, than could have hap-

pened had it been insulated and left naked of this circumstantial pomp! In the *Tempest*, again, what new modes of life, preternatural, yet far as the poles from the spiritualities of religion!" — *Biog. Essays*, pp. 75, 76.

The essay on Joan of Arc, in reference to M. Michelet's History of France, is in another style, lofty, fervid, and impassioned. We give three passages from it, as indicating its character. It thus abruptly opens.

"What is to be thought of *her*? What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl from the hills and forests of Lorraine, that — like the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forests of Judæa — rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings? The Hebrew boy inaugurated his patriotic mission by an *act*, by a victorious *act*, such as no man could deny. But so did the girl of Lorraine, if we read her story as it was read by those who saw her nearest. Adverse armies bore witness to the boy as no pretender: but so they did to the gentle girl. Judged by the voices of all who saw them *from a station of good will*, both were found true and loyal to any promises involved in their first acts. Enemies it was that made the difference between their subsequent fortunes. The boy rose — to a splendor and a noonday prosperity, both personal and public, that rang through the records of his people, and became a byword amongst his posterity for a thousand years, until the sceptre was departing from Judah. The poor, forsaken girl, on the contrary, drank not herself from that cup of rest which she had secured for France. She never sang together with the songs that rose in her native Domrémy, as echoes to the departing steps of invaders. She mingled not in the festal dances at Vaucouleurs, which celebrated in rapture the redemption of France. No! for her voice was then silent: No! for her feet were dust. Pure, innocent, noble-hearted girl! whom, from earliest youth, ever I believed in as full of truth and self-sacrifice, this was amongst the strongest pledges for *thy* side, that never once — no, not for a moment of weakness — didst thou revel in the vision of coronets and honor from man. Coronets for thee! O no! Honors, if they come when all is over, are for those that share thy blood. Daughter of Domrémy, when the gratitude of thy king shall awaken, thou wilt be sleeping the sleep of the dead. Call her, King of France, but she will not hear thee! Cite her by thy apparitors to come and receive a robe of honor, but she will be found *en contumace*. When the

thunders of universal France, as even yet may happen, shall proclaim the grandeur of the poor shepherd girl that gave up all for her country — thy ear, young shepherd girl, will have been deaf for five centuries. To suffer and to do, that was thy portion in this life; to *do* — never for thyself, always for others; to *suffer* — never in the persons of generous champions, always in thy own — that was thy destiny; and not for a moment was it hidden from thyself." — *Mis. Essays*, pp. 78, 79.

Here is a passage on the influences to which this peasant girl had been exposed, as going to elucidate the singular fact in her history, that she, ignorant and unfriended, should have undertaken so great a mission.

"The education of this poor girl was mean according to the present standard: was ineffably grand, according to a purer philosophic standard; and only not good for our age, because for us it would be unattainable. She read nothing, for she could not read; but she had heard others read parts of the Roman martyrology. She wept in sympathy with the sad *Misereres* of the Romish chanting; she rose to heaven with the glad triumphant *Gloria in Excelsis*; she drew her comfort and her vital strength from the rites of her church. But, next after these spiritual advantages, she owed most to the advantages of her situation. The fountain of Domrémy was on the brink of a boundless forest; and it was haunted to that degree by fairies that the parish priest (*curé*) was obliged to read mass there once a year, in order to keep them in any decent bounds. Fairies are important, even in a statistical view; certain weeds mark poverty in the soil, fairies mark its solitude. As surely as the wolf retires before cities, does the fairy sequester herself from the haunts of licensed victuallers. A village is too much for her nervous delicacy; at most, she can tolerate a distant view of a hamlet. We may judge, therefore, by the uneasiness and extra trouble which they gave to the parson, in what strength the fairies mustered at Domrémy, and, by a satisfactory consequence, how thinly sown with men and women must have been that region, even its inhabited spots. But the forests of Domrémy — those were the glories of the land: for, in them abode mysterious powers and ancient secrets that towered into tragic strength. 'Abbeys there were, and abbey windows, dim and dimly seen — as Moorish temples of the Hindoos,' that exercised even princely power both in Lorraine and in the German Diets. These had their sweet bells that pierced the forests for many a league at matins or vespers, and each its own dreamy legend. Few enough, and scattered enough, were these abbeys, in no degree

to disturb the deep solitude of the region ; many enough to spread a network or awning of Christian sanctity over what else might have seemed a heathen wilderness. This sort of religious talisman being secured, a man the most afraid of ghosts (like myself, suppose, or the reader,) becomes armed into courage to wander for days in their sylvan recesses." — *Mis. Essays*, pp. 91, 92.

We quote finally the grand and solemn picture with which the essay, full of faith throughout in the honesty, simplicity, nobleness of purpose, and devout religious spirit of the wonderful girl, contrasts the end of *her* life with that of her great persecutor, the Bishop of Beauvais.

"Bishop of Beauvais ! thy victim died in fire upon a scaffold — thou upon a down bed. But for the departing minutes of life, both are oftentimes alike. At the farewell crisis, when the gates of death are opening, and flesh is resting from its struggles, oftentimes the tortured and the torturer have the same truce from carnal torment ; both sink together into sleep ; together both, sometimes, kindle into dreams. When the mortal mists were gathering fast upon you two, Bishop and Shepherd girl — when the pavilions of life were closing up their shadowy curtains about you — let us try, through the gigantic glooms, to decipher the flying features of your separate visions.

"The shepherd girl that had delivered France — she, from her dungeon, she, from her baiting at the stake, she, from her duel with fire, as she entered her last dream — saw Domrémy, saw the fountain of Domrémy, saw the pomp of forests in which her childhood had wandered. That Easter festival, which man had denied to her languishing heart — that resurrection of spring-time, which the darkness of dungeons had intercepted from *her*, hungering after the glorious liberty of forests — were by God given back into her hands, as jewels that had been stolen from her by robbers. With those, perhaps, (for the minutes of dreams can stretch into ages,) was given back to her by God the bliss of childhood. By special privilege, for *her* might be created, in this farewell dream, a second childhood, innocent as the first ; but not, like *that*, sad with the gloom of a fearful mission in the rear. This mission had now been fulfilled. The storm was weathered, the skirts even of that mighty storm were drawing off. The blood, that she was to reckon for, had been exacted ; the tears, that she was to shed in secret, had been paid to the last. The hatred to herself in all eyes had been faced steadily, had been suffered, had been survived. And in her last fight upon the scaffold, she had triumphed gloriously ; victoriously she had tasted the stings of death. For all, except this comfort from her

farewell dream, she had died — died, amidst the tears of ten thousand enemies — died, amidst the drums and trumpets of armies — died, amidst peals redoubling upon peals, volleys upon volleys, from the saluting clarions of martyrs.

“Bishop of Beauvais! because the guilt-burdened man is in dreams haunted and waylaid by the most frightful of his crimes, and because upon that fluctuating mirror — rising (like the mocking mirrors of *mirage* in Arabian deserts) from the fens of death — most of all are reflected the sweet countenances which the man has laid in ruins; therefore I know, Bishop, that you, also, entering your final dream, saw Domrémy. That fountain, of which the witnesses spoke so much, showed itself to your eyes in pure morning dews; but neither dews, nor the holy dawn, could cleanse away the bright spots of innocent blood upon its surface. By the fountain, Bishop, you saw a woman seated, that hid her face. But as *you* draw near, the woman raises her wasted features. Would Domrémy know them again for the features of her child? Ah, but *you* know them, Bishop, well! Oh, mercy! what a groan was *that* which the servants, waiting outside the Bishop's dream at his bedside, heard from his laboring heart, as at this moment he turned away from the fountain and the woman, seeking rest in the forests afar off. Yet not *so* to escape the woman, whom once again he must behold before he dies. In the forests to which he prays for pity, will he find a respite? What a tumult, what a gathering of feet is there! In glades; where only wild deer should run, armies and nations are assembling; towering in the fluctuating crowd are phantoms that belong to departed hours. There is the great English Prince, Regent of France. There is my Lord of Winchester, the princely Cardinal, that died and made no sign. There is the Bishop of Beauvais, clinging to the shelter of thickets. What building is that which hands so rapid are raising? Is it a martyr's scaffold? Will they burn the child of Domrémy a second time? No: it is a tribunal that rises to the clouds; and two nations stand around it, waiting for a trial. Shall my Lord of Beauvais sit again upon the judgment-seat, and again number the hours for the innocent? Ah! no: he is the prisoner at the bar. Already all is waiting; the mighty audience is gathered, the Court is hurrying to their seats, the witnesses are arrayed, the trumpets are sounding, the judge is going to take his place. Oh! but this is sudden. My lord, have you no counsel? ‘Counsel I have none: in heaven above, or on earth beneath, counsellor there is none now that would take a brief from *me*: all are silent.’ Is it, indeed, come to this? Alas! the time is short, the tumult is wondrous, the crowd stretches away into

infinity, but yet I will search in it for somebody to take your brief : I know of somebody that will be your counsel. Who is this that cometh from Domrémy ? Who is she that cometh in bloody coronation robes from Rheims ? Who is she that cometh with blackened flesh from walking the furnaces of Rouen ? This is she, the shepherd girl, counsellor that had none for herself, whom I choose, Bishop, for yours. She it is, I engage, that shall take my lord's brief. She it is, Bishop, that would plead for you : yes, Bishop, *SHE* — when heaven and earth are silent." *Mis. Essays*, pp. 117 – 120.

Our object in these extracts has been simply to give those of our readers who have not themselves fallen in with the works, some idea of this fertile, but desultory writer. Throughout these volumes, we might pick out scores of delightful descriptions, and brief but subtle disquisitions on topics of great variety of interest. In the second volume of the *Literary Reminiscences* is a highly wrought and touching description of a remarkable suicide among the mountains of Cumberland, which we quote entire.

"There was a case, a little before I came into the country, of a studious and meditative young boy, who found no pleasure but in books, and the search after knowledge. He languished, with a sort of despairing nympholepsy, after intellectual pleasures — for which he felt too well assured that *his* term of allotted time, the short period of years through which his relatives had been willing to support him at St. Bees, was rapidly drawing to an end. In fact, it was just at hand ; and he was sternly required to take a long farewell of the poets and geometricians for whose sublime contemplations he hungered and thirsted. One week was to have transferred him to some huxtering concern, which, not in any spirit of pride he ever affected to despise, but which in utter alienation of heart he loathed — as one whom nature, and his own diligent cultivation of the opportunities recently open to him for a brief season, had dedicated to another yoke. He mused — revolved his situation in his own mind — computed his power to liberate himself from the bondage of dependency — calculated the chances of his ever obtaining this liberation, from change in the position of his family, or revolution in his fortunes — and, finally, attempted conjecturally to determine the amount of effect which his new and illiberal employments might have upon his own mind in weaning him from his present elevated tasks, and unfitting him for their enjoyment in distant years, when circumstances might again place it in his power to indulge them.

" These meditations were, in part, communicated to a friend ; and in part, also, the result to which they brought him. That this result was gloomy, his friend knew ; but not, as in the end it appeared, that it was despairing. Such, however, it was : and, accordingly, having satisfied himself that the chances of a happier destiny were for him slight or none — and having, by a last fruitless effort, ascertained that there was no hope whatever of mollifying his relatives, or of obtaining a year's delay of his sentence — he walked quietly up to the cloudy wildernesses within Blencathara ; read his *Æschylus*, (perhaps in those appropriate scenes of the *Prometheus*, that pass amidst the wild valleys of the Caucasus, and below the awful summits, untrod by man, of the ancient *Elborus*,) read him for the last time ; for the last time fathomed the abyss-like subtleties of his favorite geometrician, the mighty *Apollonius* ; for the last time retraced some parts of the narrative, so simple in its natural grandeur, composed by that imperial captain, the most majestic man of ancient history —

' The foremost man of all this world,'

in the confession of his enemies — the first of the *Cæsars*. These three authors — *Æschylus*, *Apollonius*, and *Cæsar* — he studied until the daylight waned, and the stars began to appear. Then he made a little pile of the three volumes that served him for a pillow ; took a dose, such as he had heard would be sufficient, of *laudanum* ; laid his head upon the records of the three mighty spirits of elder times ; and, with his face upturned to the heavens and the stars, slipped quietly away into a sleep upon which no morning ever dawned. The *laudanum* — whether it were from the effect of the open air, or from some peculiarity of temperament — had not produced sickness in the first stage of its action, nor convulsions in the last. But from the serenity of his countenance, and from the tranquil maintenance of his original supine position — for his head was still pillowed upon the three intellectual Titans, Greek and Roman, and his eyes were still directed towards the stars — it would appear that he had died placidly, and without a struggle. In this way, the imprudent boy, who, like *Chatterton*, would not wait for the change that a day might bring, obtained the liberty he sought ; and whatsoever, in his last scene of life, was not explained by the objects and the arrangement of the objects about him, found a sufficient solution in previous conversations with various acquaintances, and in his confidential explanations of his purposes, which he had communicated, so far as he felt it safe, to his only friend." — *Lit. Rem.* vol. ii. pp. 93 – 95.

Here is a fine passage on the tendency of sailors to superstition.

" All sailors, it is notorious, are superstitious ; partly, I sup-

pose, from looking out so much upon the wilderness of waves, empty of all human life ; for mighty solitudes are generally fear-haunted and fear-peopled ; such, for instance, as the solitudes of forests, where, in the absence of human forms and ordinary human sounds, are discerned forms more dusky and vague, not referred by the eye to any known type, and sounds imperfectly intelligible. And, therefore, are all German coal-burners, wood-cutters, &c., superstitious. Now the sea is often peopled, amidst its ravings, with what seem innumerable human voices — such voices, or as ominous, as what was heard by Kubla Khan — ‘ancestral voices prophesying war ;’ oftentimes laughter mixes, from a distance, (seeming to come also from distant times, as well as distant places,) with the uproar of waters ; and doubtless shapes of fear, or shapes of beauty not less awful, are at times seen upon the waves by the diseased eye of the sailor, in other cases besides the somewhat rare one of calenture. This vast solitude of the sea being taken, therefore, as one condition of the superstitious fear found so commonly among sailors, a second may be the perilous insecurity of their own lives — or, (if the lives of sailors, after all, by means of large immunities from danger in other shapes, are *not* so insecure as is supposed, though, by the way, it is enough for this result that, to themselves, they seem so,) yet at all events, the insecurity of the ships in which they sail. In such a case, in the case of battle, and in others where the empire of chance seems absolute, there the temptation is greatest to dally with supernatural oracles and supernatural means of consulting them. Finally, the interruption habitually of all ordinary avenues to information about the fate of their dearest relatives ; the consequent agitation which must often possess those who are reëntering upon home waters ; and the sudden burst, upon stepping ashore, of heart-shaking news in long accumulated arrears — these are circumstances which dispose the mind to look out for relief towards signs and omens as one way of breaking the shock by dim anticipations.” *Life and Man*. pp. 206, 207.

We can hardly help quoting the admirable criticism on the English language contained in pp. 297 – 301 of the same volume, principally because it so clearly indicates the value of the Latin element in our tongue, at a time when it is the fashion to cry up the Anglo-Saxon portion as sufficient for all purposes. But we forbear, and will only please ourselves with the following description of German prose style, which many a learner of that language will find some relief in subscribing to with all his heart. He is speaking specially of the style of Kant.

"To German poetry, there is a known, fixed, calculable limit. Infinity, absolute infinity, is impracticable in any German metre. Not so with German prose. Style, in any sense, is an inconceivable idea to a German intellect. Take the word in the limited sense of what the Greeks called *Συνθεσις ὀνομάτων* — that is, the construction of sentences — I affirm that a German (unless it were here and there a Lessing) cannot admit such an idea. Books there are in German, and, in other respects, very good books too, which consist of one or two enormous sentences. A German sentence describes an arch between the rising and the setting sun. Take Kant for illustration: he has actually been complimented by the cloud-spinner, Frederick Schlegel, who is now in Hades, as a most original artist in the matter of style. 'Original,' Heaven knows he was! His idea of a sentence was as follows: We have all seen or read of an old family coach, and the process of packing it for a journey to London some seventy or eighty years ago. Night and day, for a week at least, sat the housekeeper, the lady's maid, the butler, the gentlemen's gentleman, &c. packing the huge ark in all its recesses, its 'imperials,' its 'wills,' its 'Salisbury boots,' its 'sword-cases,' its front pockets, side pockets, rear pockets, its 'hammer-cloth cellars,' (which a lady explains to me as a corruption from *hamper-cloth*, as originally a cloth for hiding a hamper stored with *viaticum*.) until all the uses and needs of man and of human life, savage or civilized, were met with separate provision by the infinite chaos. Pretty nearly upon the model of such an old family coach packing, did Kant institute and pursue the packing and stuffing of one of his regular sentences. Every thing that could ever be needed in the way of explanation, illustration, restraint, inference, by-clauses, or indirect comment, was to be crammed, according to this German philosopher's taste, into the front pockets, side pockets, or rear pockets of the one original sentence. Hence it is that a sentence will last in reading whilst a man

'Might reap an acre of his neighbor's corn.'"

Life and Man. pp. 314, 315.

We are not called upon to assign a definite rank to Mr. De Quincey among authors. His complete published works have not at this time come under our notice, nor, we trust, is his literary labor yet done. For the high merits which we have sufficiently illustrated, for learning, exuberance and subtlety of thought, mastery of the language, noble and genial enthusiasm, and resolute honesty, we believe these writings destined to be added to the permanent treasures of literature. We should have rejoiced to see a mind so large

and so amply furnished, moving in a wider circle, illustrating the broad fields of history, or general literature, or moral or metaphysical science, instead of prodigally spending its abundant resources in splendid, but comparatively desultory, efforts. A greater unity of literary life would have insured a more solid and larger fame, and a more enduring influence. Has the same infirmity of will, which marked the course of S. T. Coleridge, been found in this life too? and may it, in both cases, be traced to a similar cause? Nevertheless, though literature in the hands of Mr. De Quincey does not take its widest range, yet neither is it narrow, nor exclusive, nor unfruitful. Many will come reverently and gladly to light their lamps at these brilliant and many-colored flames. His name, too, will be associated in not unworthy fellowship with those of Coleridge, and Wordsworth, and Southey, and Wilson, and Lamb, the greater and the lesser lights in that constellation which has glorified the firmament of England during the first half of our eventful century.

ART. VII. — *The Past, Present, and Future of the Republic.* Translated from the French of ALPHONSE DE LAMARTINE, author of "The History of the Girondists," "Memoirs of my Youth," &c. New York: Harpers. 1850. 12mo. pp. 163.

IMPENETRABLE self-ignorance is undoubtedly the most salient feature of Lamartine's character. This results in great part from an egoism too intense and engrossing to permit him ever to contemplate himself objectively. But, as he appears to us at certainly a sufficient distance for a just perspective, he possesses no great qualities. As a writer, he is sentimental rather than imaginative. He has few original conceptions, but is a skilful manipulator of the current language of feeling. He has a strong poetic susceptibility, yet lacks creative genius.

The true poet can always be, if he will, a man of practical wisdom; for his mission is not to disfigure or to derange